

Character, Community, Competence

Big Idea: Character is the end product of growth. Community is the context in which significant growth takes place. Competence, including skills and knowledge, is a set of tools for growth.

Some people think the goal of Christian growth is competence: knowing how to find Galatians, understanding what it says, and becoming skilled at witnessing and prayer. But if you've been following our story, you know there's a lot more to spiritual growth than competence. Competence is important for growth, but it's not the goal of the growth. In this session, we'll examine how competence fits in with community and character.

1. How have you seen Gerry, Linda and Jackie grow in character?

Gerry - He has learned he can't control his anger on his own; he needs God. He's learned to humble himself even in front of Erik. He is listening to his wife instead of giving her ultimatums.

Linda - She has learned from vulnerability. She stopped trying to control and change Gerry and Erik and stopped hiding from them at work. She's telling them the truth kindly, showing them how they affect her without punishing them.

Jackie - Losing her house and having to take a job have humbled her. She is more secure in Christ and able to care for someone else.

All three have grown in their faith (believing Christ really is who the Bible says He is), hope (believing God will care for them even when circumstances are agonizing) and love (the ability to allow others to access their hearts and to give others what they really need).

2. What has community provided for the characters in our video?

- A safe place to face their character and faith issues
- Accountability that is loving and respectful yet doesn't allow them to hide from their problems
- It has encouraged them to grow in competencies like Bible knowledge
- It is a healthy place where an unbeliever like Mary Beth could be fully accepted with all her doubts and questions and allowed to slowly be drawn to Christ

3. Do you have community like theirs? If so, explain. If not, what is missing?

4. What do you think a spiritual parent's role is in helping someone grow in character?

Learn what the Bible says about character.

Ask probing questions; provide a safe person for confession.

Encourage spiritual growth and nudge the complacent.

Model Godly character.



5. Read 2 Cor. 3:4-6. What do you these verses mean to you?

Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant-not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6

Suggested Additional Reading:

Read chapter 11 of *Lifestyle Discipleship*